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**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement and Free Trade

I agree with the settlement reached to allow Microsoft the 'right of freedom to innovate' and not have their hands tied in markets due to interest groups and government interference. It is the right decision for an open and free market and for consumers world wide.

On another note, I want to comment on the US government's sanctions (through countervail and anti-dumping actions) on Canadian softwood lumber industry. Rich interest groups in the US (with the US government support) are trying to place ARTIFICIAL economic barriers on Canadian softwood lumber entering the US. Lumber that is required for the housing in the US. This practice raises the cost of housing in the US and keeps Americans out of the housing market.

If the US truly believes in free and open markets (a comment that Americans make all the time), then interest groups should not be able to put barriers on products needed by the US. The US and Canada are the largest traders in the world and the sanctions imposed on the Canadian softwood industry is a slap in the face of a country that supports the United States of America.

In my mind, the softwood lumber issue should be settled once and for all - a product that is part of the free and open market between Canada and the US.

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